

APPROVED FOR RELEASE: 2007/02/08: CIA-RDP82-00850R000300020007-9

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JPRS L/9235

6 August 1980

Korean Affairs Report

(FOUO 6/80)



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KOREAN AFFAIRS REPORT

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S.KOREA/POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

'JAPAN TIMES' VIEWS U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARD ROK

OW100349 Tokyo THE JAPAN TIMES in English 9 Jun 80 p 14

[Editorial: "U.S. Dilemma in S. Korea"]

[Excerpts] The United States has failed to influence events within South Korea and seems to have very little choice at the moment but to accept political realities since its major concern is that nation's security.

South Korea has often been an embarrassment to the United States. When President Jimmy Carter entered the White House three and a half years ago, his then avowed policy of defending human rights on a worldwide scale came into immediate conflict with the regime of the late President Pak Chong-hui.

Despite the conflict, the U.S. Administration was forced to underscore the fact that U.S. policy toward South Korea placed a higher priority on defending that nation from possible North Korean aggression than on converting the South Korean Government to democracy.

Conveniently, U.S. intelligence studies showed that North Korean military forces were larger and more powerful than previously estimated. Therefore, Mr Carter could easily back down on his commitment, made rashly during the last presidential campaign, to withdraw U.S. ground forces from South Korea.

There was discussion in Washington that the U.S. should pressure South Korea to speed democratic reforms. But it became even more apparent that the U.S. has really very little leverage to influence events, unless it threatens to abandon South Korea. Its aid to South Korea now amounts annually to only \$127 million in military credit sales and \$30 million in food. And a shut-off would have little impact. Also, the U.S. is reluctant to use economic sanctions at a time when the South Korean economy is encountering great difficulties.

What worries the U.S. Government even more than the new South Korean rulers' failure to appreciate the U.S. concern is the belief that the South Korean

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people are opposed to a return of military dictatorship, and that their resistance could lead to even more dangerous turmoil. General Chon should not be too smug about U.S. impotence. He should listen to the advice from Washington and even more to the silent voice of the people since his country's survival could very well depend on giving more freedom to the people rather than suppressing it.

South Korea desperately needs to find political stability and unity and this cannot be achieved if the people are discontented with and distrustful of their own rulers.

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ROK PRESIDENT'S SPEECH ON AMENDING CONSTITUTION

OW180935 Tokyo THE JAPAN TIMES in English 17 Jun 80 p 12

[Editorial: "President Choe's Clarification"]

[Text] The heavy cloud of gloom hanging over the Republic of Korea was lifted a little by President Choe Kyu-ha's special statement last week. What he did was to reaffirm, albeit with some new policy modifications, the so-called timetable for democratization announced by himself last November.

President Choe said that a draft for an amended constitution would be put to a national referendum by the end of October this year. This will be followed by the elections of the president and the national assembly in the first half of next year, with a newly constituted government being installed before the end of June 1981.

The latest clarification brought a measure of relief to the people in South Korea and its friends abroad, who were in the dark as to what the military-dominated government in Seoul plans to do about the country's political future. The question, however, is not words but action. It is hoped that South Korea achieve an early return to normality, as promised, through democratic procedure.

In his statement of last Thursday, President Choe made clear the government's views on how the constitution should be amended. He said the government's chief concerns in rewriting the basic law lay in banishing corruption from among public office holders, avoiding social unrest and dangerous divisions in national opinion, promoting justice in Korean society and preserving the free economic system.

President Choe, however, failed to throw much light on how the government proposed to deal with central issues that emerged in the South Korean debate on the constitutional reforms before it was suspended by recent events. These concern, among other things, the relative powers of the presidency and the cabinet, the term of office for the president and the structure of the national assembly.

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The Choe government, under the strong influence of the military, may be wishing to retain the restrictive thrust of the present constitution bequeathed by the late President Pak Chong-hui. It would seem, however, that the South Korean rulers would be only sowing seeds of conflict for the future if they totally ignored constitutional drafts presented earlier by political parties.

As for the direction of national policies ahead, President Choe promised that the ban on political activities would be lifted once public order and social stability were restored. He said he was determined to bring a new mode of political evolution conducive to social and economic progress in South Korea.

He warned that attempts to overthrow the government with demonstrations and disturbances would be dealt with severely. At the same time, he declared the government would go ahead with reforms to root out corruption in high places and investigation into amassing of wealth through misuse of public offices.

The idea is apparently to win popular sympathy with a crackdown on those political leaders thriving under the old regime while seeking to contain anti-government movements by students and dissenting politicians.

There is no doubt that President Choe's speech reflects to a large measure the governing stance favored by Lt. General Chon Tu-Hwan and his colleagues in the military establishment now in control of South Korea. Significantly, President Choe spoke in his speech of "normalization" but not of "democratization."

Despite the reassurance offered by President Choe and by the generals last week, the future of the Republic of Korea remains grim and uncertain. The nation's economic life is in deep trouble with the simultaneous attacks of inflation and slump, whose seriousness was underscored by the economic measures announced early last month.

The U.S., the key ally of South Korea, looks upon the new regime and its authoritarian orientation with a strong sense of disapproval. Washington even threatens to review the entire gamut of the U.S.-ROK relations, except the U.S.-commitment to South Korea's security.

The immediate test of the Seoul government's sincerity in normalizing the political life of South Korea comes in September when the new school term begins. By then, it must also make moves toward allowing a resumption of activities by political parties. It is inconceivable that South Korea can endure a nearly total freeze on freedom and strained relations with the U.S. indefinitely.

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HISTORICAL, CULTURAL FACTORS WHICH LED TO KWANGJU RIOT OUTLINED

Tokyo CHUO KORON in Japanese Jul 80 pp 259-265

[Article by Minoru Shibata, SANKEI SHIMBUN columnist: "The Background of Kwangju Riots"]

[Excerpts] The Kwangju riots began moments after the government of Republic of Korea nationally proclaimed martial law from midnight of 18 May and cracked down even further.

For complicity in the "18 May Incident," Kim Tae-chung, along with other anti-establishment leaders, was put under arrest. But from the special interim investigative report released by the Martial Law Command on 22 May, Kim Tae-chung appeared to be its principal target. The report reveals that on 7 May, he made a "national declaration for promotion of democratization," tried to provoke an uprising of students and citizens from 22 May and attempted to veer student street demonstrations into anti-government mass demonstrations. Also, around March, he delivered from 300,000 to 1 million won [120,000 to 400,000 yen] in campaign funds to student leaders of Seoul National University, Korea University and Pusan National University to win them over.

With military leaders, regarding Kim Tae-chung as an "unforgiveable, dangerous figure" and as the principal target in the "18 May Incident," Kwangju immediately ignited. But why were large-scale, drawn-out riots limited to Kwangju without engulfing other cities? Presently, there are varying opinions concerning the background. One view is that they are the present-day version of the "Silla-Paekshe War" as mentioned in Kim Tae-chung's election stronghold. Another is that student demonstrations in Seoul and Pusan were staged in the heart of cities and away from civilian houses without involving the citizens, whereas those in Kwangju were held in the heart of the city where civilian houses are located and involved the populace. Even though some facets are true, a riddle still remains.

For instance, the city of Kwangju is the seat of government of South Cholla Province. For Kim Tae-chung, a native of Mokp'o, it is his central election

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stronghold with a strong organization. The mention of election strongholds raises the question of why anti-government demonstrations did not occur in Puyo City, South Chungch'ong Province, the hometown of Democratic Republican Party President Kim Chong-pil, or in Ulsan, North Kyongsang Province, the hometown of former Korean Central Intelligence Agency Director Yi Hu-rak. Election strongholds alone do not offer an adequate explanation.

If the contention is that riots represent the present-day version of the "Silla-Paekshe War," it still does not provide a fully satisfactory answer since Puyo, the hometown of President Kim Chong-pil, was the capital of Paekshe. Then, what is the most logical explanation? I see it as an explosion of hatred for the historical discrimination against Cholla Province.

First, in the old days, Paekshe, a part of Cholla Province, was unified by Silla and the Korean Peninsula entered an era of "unified Silla." During this period, Paekshe was under servile state, marking the beginning of a "history of hatred" by Paekshe towards Silla.

Second, during the 600-year Yi Dynasty, the central authority discriminated against Cholla Province in the hirings of government officials and exploited the farmers mercilessly. Thus, what triggered the farmers' war known as the "Gonghak Rebellion" in South Cholla Province was the "explosion of hatred."

Most history books on Korea have failed to cover discrimination against Cholla Province. But Kim Tal-su, in his book chosen [Korea] [Iwanami Shinsho], notes: "In this era of Yi dynasty, a Korean-ish, evil practice was introduced. This war narrow-minded discrimination."

"The legislation and enforcement of such matters as imprisonment of people [which means non-employment in key posts] could perhaps be overlooked as they are based on Confucianism, but provincial discrimination of northwesterners, northeasterners and those of Cholla Province after the Chong Yo-rip Rebellion [1589] is a strange practice seen only in Korea."

Due to such historical developments, the people of Cholla Province came to be held in contempt. As a special correspondent during the "16 May military revolution," I was able to witness such instances up to my ears. Many South Koreans refer to Cholla Province as Hawaii, in a derogatory sense. I have also heard complaints that "one cannot be trusted if he is from Cholla Province."

When asked the reason, they would say those people are good in currying favors, but once they fall on good times, they would kick or betray you. There is no telling when they will kill you while you're asleep.... I have also heard that boarding room owners in Seoul refuse to rent rooms to students from Cholla Province. People from Cholla Province, unlike others,

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seek to change their permanent domicile upon arrival in Seoul. Apparently, they ardently hope to conceal that they are from Cholla Province.

Rather than a mere "provincialism," it is a case of an abnormal "Cholla Province discrimination consciousness." Many of my South Korean friends happen to be from there. They are all wonderful. Many owners of famed restaurants in Seoul are from Cholla Province and the native dishes are tasty and popular. Why then, are they despised? It can only be to a mischievous chief of history.

Third, an immediate reason may be the 18 year reign of President Pak. Under Pak's regime, remarkable economic modernization was achieved. But in contrast to the eastern coast of Kyongsang Province, comprising Silla, where many modern industrial complexes were developed, particularly in Pusan and Pohang, there are none in Cholla Province's southwest coast except for a couple which went bankrupt.

The reasons cited are the extreme tidal differences on the southwest coast, making port construction difficult, while the east coast is purportedly ideal for plant construction. The story sounds convincing enough, but the people of Cholla Province regard it as discrimination against Cholla Province by the "dominant Kyongsang Province," President Pak's home province.

Fourth, both Defense Security Commander Chon Tu-hwan, who assumed military leadership as a result of the "12 December Incident" and Prime Minister Sin Hyon-hwak, who came to power after the President's death, are from North Kyongsang Province. In the eyes of the people of Cholla Province, "domination by Kyongsang Province" still persists.

I make it a point to visit South Korea once each year. During my two trips last year--one during my summer vacation and the other to gather new material--I found no change in the contemptuous feeling toward the people of Cholla Province. Although the Pak regime achieved economic modernization and transformed an array of social consciousness, it was unable to alter the discriminatory consciousness toward Cholla Province. The people showed unsympathetic and chilly reaction toward the student demonstrations in Seoul, but in Kwangju, many of them participated in the student demonstrations. This was due to none other than an outburst of deep-rooted hatred by Cholla Province citizens over the long-standing, historical discrimination.

Guerilla War with Looted Weapons

In the Kwangju riots, the students took to an unprecedented guerilla strategy by seizing military weapons and armored vehicles. This does not imply that the martial law forces had abandoned their arms and fled upon encirclement by the masses. Virtually all of the 4,000 pieces of arms were plundered from weapons sheds. Obviously, it was a guerilla type war, a full-fledged war with seized arms.

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Needless to say, Kim Tae-chung probably foresaw what was coming and steadily consolidated his organization. Even in Seoul, and ever since the "12 December Incident," those close to him were on alert against the watchful eyes of Commander Chon Tu-hwan should Kim Tae-chung move about actively. Thus, it is easy to imagine that preparations were made to organize anti-government demonstrations in South Cholla Province should Kim Tae-chung be re-arrested. Rumors prevailed that women of Kwangju had been raped by martial law forces during the latest turmoil. In this regard, some contend that "Kim Tae-chung could be behind this, because during the past presidential election, he distributed wrong-sized sandals to voters in the name of the Democratic Republican Party, thereby inviting complaints against that party."

Be that as it may, was Kim Tae-chung behind the bold guerilla-type warfare of fighting with seized weapons? If that transcended his organization and policy of anti-government demonstrations, the only explanation would be the penetration of "external forces." Outside radical students could have assembled in Kwangju or gangs of Cholla Province youths living in Seoul, particularly in Myongdong, could have infiltrated Kwangju in great numbers as they have suddenly vanished.

Stories abound about "impure elements" or North Korean spies hiding somewhere in South Korea infiltrating into Kwangju. This is because the operation of seizing military weapons is clearly a type of guerilla warfare and is too well organized to believe that it arose from the spontaneous reaction of the common people. To "impure elements," Cholla Province is reportedly the most ideal site for infiltration. Because of hundreds of small islands, access by sea would be relatively simple. Moreover, there happens to be a historical "track record": In October 1948, only two months after South Korea gained independence, the Yosun-Sunch'on Insurrection broke out in South Cholla Province.

Earlier in February that year, soon after the United Nations had passed a resolution calling for "general elections in regions where possible," some 2,000 communist elements who had underwent drills centered on the People's Committee and Democratic Youth League launched an attack, under secret orders to disrupt the general elections, against the Cheju Island police station and nine police substations, killing policemen and rightist politicians. Casualties numbered 257 dead and 600 wounded in this guerilla war. Eight months after this incident, the Yosun-Sunch'on Insurrection erupted.

The 14th Regiment, garrisoned at Yosun and assigned to quell the Cheju Island incident, converted into the rebel forces, with revolting units organizing people's committees in city areas. The rebellion in Yosun quickly spread to the city of Sunch'on, and a large number of citizens were massacred. The mastermind of the Yosun-Sunch'on Insurrection, organized by South Korean Labor Party members, was 1st Lt Kim Chi-hoe, its cell member. A week after Yosun was liberated by government forces, he continued his fight from nearby Ch'ongom and Mt Chiri. Such a tradition exists in South Cholla Province. To those familiar with the history of the Korean Peninsula, the latest Kwangju riots should bring to mind the anti-Japanese

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students' struggles of 1929 and the Yosu-Sunch'on Insurrection. The guerilla war seen in the Kwangju riots is not unrelated to South Cholla Province's historical tradition of insurrection.

How did the martial law forces cope with the Kwangju riots? They displayed an astonishing degree of perseverance. It was in marked contrast to the strict hard line taken during uprisings in Pusan and Masan immediately prior to President Pak's death.

In the wake of the "18 May Incident," they had been anticipating anti-government demonstrations to occur in South Cholla Province. As a result, full talks had been held between the military and government, martial law forces were ordered to hold their fire and efforts to concentrate on political tasks were rewarding. At one time, the number of students and citizens taking part in anti-government demonstrations reached 300,000. But because of steps taken to prevent further escalation, surprisingly only 295 radical students who held out to the last were arrested.

Appeals were made constantly to moderate citizens and students, and steps were taken to separate and isolate citizens from the radical students. The final assault was launched only after long hours of efforts to persuade the students and until after domestic public opinion had heightened to the point where strong measures were necessary.

Had the martial law forces assumed a strong posture from the outset, a grave, irreparable situation could have been created. On this point, the public image of Commander Chon Tu-hwan, the supreme commander for suppression of "Kwangju riots," may be in for a marked change.

Even if "Kwangju riots" and the guerilla-type operation of seizing military weapons transcended Kim Tae-chung's organization and guidance policies, the military will probably be forced to lay all the blame on him. This is because the "18 May Incident" made him the most vital target. It would be an irony of history indeed if the "Kwangju riots" which supported Kim Tae-chung were to instead inflict a mortal injury on him.

Suspicious Cast on Kim Tae-chung

Why do the military leaders consider Kim Tae-chung as such a "dangerous figure"? It could not be simply because of his anti-structure stand. An insight can be had from the Martial Law Command's interim investigative report of 22 May on his ideological background, released after his arrest over the "18 May Incident."

"After Kim Tae-chung was freed, he became a public relations man for the leftist Konkuk Chunbi Wiwonhoe [National Construction Preparatory Society] and at the end of 1946 he was named chief of organization department of the opposition party's Mokp'o branch. Further, in October 1972, together with Yim Ch'ang-yong who had organized overseas pro-North Korean residents for

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"the purpose of arranging their visits to North Korea, Kim Tae-chung assisted in organizing Hanmintong [People's Conference for Restoration of Democracy in South Korea] and was installed as its preparatory committee chairman. And while living abroad, Kim Tae-chung made statements in sympathy to North Korean contentions."

It was the first time since the "26 October Incident" that the Martial Law Command had cast such suspicions on Kim Tae-chung. It is certain that he will be questioned on such allegations henceforth. I learned about the Martial Law Command's inquiry based on further allegations about Kim Tae-chung's past leftist activities which I was in Seoul last January and February. According to subsequent information, investigations further disclosed:

1. Leftist Activities Before the Korean Conflict

A. In 1946 [age 21], he was put in charge of organization and public relations for the Mokp'o district under the defunct New Democratic Party founded by Kim Kwa-pong, vice-head of North Korea. Kim Tae-chung also served as the Democratic Youth League's Mokp'o District committee vice chairman and as deputy chief, general affairs department, Mokp'o Guidance League.

B. In June 1946, he explained the aims and activities of the Democratic Youth League to Kim P'an-sop, chairman, No 22 dong committeeman of Mokp'o People's Committee in an effort to get him to join, and was active in promoting Communist ideology and structure.

C. Records indicate that during the so-called "1 October riot" on 31 October 1946, he was active as a member of an action unit under the Democratic National Front and was arrested and detained for 20 days along with Kim Sam-po and Cho Kil-cho on the charge of inciting or positively participating in attacks on police stations in Taesong, Nangyo, Sogyo and Sosan-dong in Mokp'o police jurisdiction and for murder and destruction of property.

D. In September 1948 [age 23], he registered as Mokp'o City party member of the South Korean Labor Party and served as chief, Young Men's Department, Mokp'o City Party, and as standing committeeman.

E. He surrendered to the shore patrol of Mokp'o district and arrested and detailed immediately after the war by the Guidance League. According to files of Counter Intelligence Corps of the U.S. Army, in the face of advances of North Korean forces at this time, he was to be shot upon retreat but narrowly escaped death because of mistaken identity for a person named Kim Chin-ha.

2. Korean War Period

A. Upon entry of North Korean forces into Mokp'o, he planned to organize a Mokp'o people's committee.

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B. Owing to revelation of debts incurred in his prewar marine transport business, wages in arrears and embezzlement, Kim Tae-chung was arrested by internal affairs members of the North Korean forces and confined in the Mokp'o Reformatory [prison]. But he managed to escape on 28 September during the UN liberation and survive.

3. Postwar Activities and Gists of Statements

A. Around January 1956, he called for interchange of communications between North and South Korea by getting China to join the UN. On 18 February 1961, he stated before the Democratic Party's Sinp'unghoe (New Wind Society) that China's admission to the UN was inevitable as an international trend and thus was denounced by party members. He has foresight, no doubt, but his aims remain unclear.

B. In the presidential election of 1971, he was nominated as the New Democratic Party candidate. His beliefs, which were well received, consisted of: (a) theory of security by four major powers at the exclusion of UN functions, and (b) theory of abolition of reserve forces and student military trainings. It is true that these contentions had the support of North Korea.

C. Between March and 8 August 1973, he directed the organization, Hammintong, established in the United States and Japan, and served as its president. After restoration of his rights on 29 February 1980 and sensing a disadvantage in supporting Communism, he denied any connection therewith; until then, he had never refuted his having served as president of Hammintong. The general understanding is that Hammintong's ties with North Korea is irrefutable. It is also a fact that Chosoren [General Association of Korean Residents in Japan] is linked to the line involving Kim Tae-chung.

D. In 1967, when Kim Tae-chung was chairman of the New Democratic Party's Mokp'o District Party, Ch'a Chong-ch'ol, chief of the Labor Department, Mokp'o District, was among those close to him. Ch'a was a spy involved in the underground in South Cholla Province. Upon instructions of Chong Sun-p'al Chosoren's supervisory operative in Osaka City, Ch'a visited Japan to contact Chosoren and returned to South Korea to continue his activities. He and 14 other members of the group were arrested as spies in May 1967.

E. Kim Tae-hwan, a relative of Kim Tae-chung, was the New Democratic Party's chief of Mokp'o City finance department. Records reflect that Kim Tae-hwan continued to contact Yim Chong-ch'ol and three other non-converts confined at reformatories in Kwangju and Mokp'o in connection with Ch'a's espionage ring.

4. Espionage and Kim Tae-chung

A. On 18 July 1968, Kim Tae-chung met with Chong T'ae-muk, the mastermind of the Ingja Island espionage case, on two occasions [around May 1967] at

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Hanil Inn at Ch'ukkyo-dong, Mokp'o City. Records show that according to Chong T'ae muk's testimony, Kim was given the following election strategy instructions:

Because demonstrations of full power and influence-buying by the government party can be expected in Mokp'o elections, the election structure must be camouflaged so as not to reveal it until just before the election. (b) No moves must be made to curb the influence-buying offensive of the government party. Efforts must be made to obtain proof for subsequent public exposure. (c) Election campaigns must be concentrated in rural areas rather than in cities. (d) During stumping lectures, authorities should be provoked in order to win sympathetic votes by claiming suppression.

B. Kim Tae-ung, a journalist during his days in Japan, went to the Chinese mainland via Tsingtao after the war and stayed there for 10 years before returning to his homeland in 1963. He is the elder brother of Kim Tae-hwan. An associate of Kim Tae-chung, Ko Ui-suk, also visited China with Kim Tae-ung.

C. Information was received from an informant that Cho In-yong, missing and wanted as traitor after the Korean conflict over an incident involving a fire official in the Mokp'o internal affairs station, surfaced in Pusan around February 1960 and was in contact with his younger brother, Cho Tong-hwan, of Honam-dong, Mokp'o City. An investigation into this was interrupted at the strong request of Cho Kil-hwan, secretary to Kim Tae-chung. Cho Kil-hwan is the younger brother of Cho In-yong.

In-depth investigations are said to have been made of statements made abroad by Kim Tae-chung, his political experiences, the manner of promoting popularity, and relations with Hanmintong. Thus, the "18 May Incident" is significant in that it not only led to stronger measures toward national, emergency martial law to cope with escalating student demonstrations but also to the arrest of Kim Tae-chung, who had been in the background and inciting the student demonstrations, as a "communist element."

Previously on 10 March 1976, Kim Tae-chung was sentenced to five years imprisonment at hard labor, with suspension of his rights for an equal term, for violation of Presidential Emergency Decree No 9 in sponsoring a "democratic restoration declaration case" at Myongdong Church on 1 March 1976. But he was released 27 December 1978 on a stay of execution. He has yet to serve two years and three months, but has been exempted due to the lifting of the emergency decree on 8 December 1979. Further, he was sentenced to one year imprisonment by the Seoul Criminal District Court on 13 December 1975 for infractions during the presidential and parliamentary elections of 1967 and 1971. As he has appealed to the Seoul High Court on 18 December 1975, his case is, legally speaking, still pending.

Nonetheless, Kim Tae-chung was arrested for violation of the Emergency Martial Law Proclamation in connection with the "18 May Incident." His case

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is now under investigation by the Martial Law Command's Joint Investigation Headquarters [Chon Tu-hwan, chief] and is likely to be tried before a military court. The "18 May Incident" and the Kwangju riots represent a place of duel for Chon Tu-hwan and Kim Tae-chung.

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